

The attached Appendix includes a marked-up copy of each amended claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

I. The Claims Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to claim 2 based on informalities. Claim 2 is amended to obviate this objection. Withdrawal of the objection to claim 2 is respectfully requested.

II. The Claims Satisfy the Requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claims 5 and 6 are amended to obviate this rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is respectfully requested.

III. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Great Britain Patent No. 1,248,891 (hereinafter "the 891 patent"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The 891 patent does not disclose a vulcanizing mold for pneumatic tires including, inter alia, a single cam ring in direct engagement with upper and lower tread mold members, as recited in claim 1, and as similarly recited in claim 6.

Instead, the 891 patent discloses a press mold in which the lower tread mold members 10 are engaged with the upper tread mold members 42, while only the upper tread mold members 42 are engaged with the cam member 43. Thus, the radial force for driving the lower tread mold members radially inwards or outwards is transmitted from the cam member to the lower tread mold members through the upper tread mold members. Contrarily, the upper and lower tread mold members of the claimed invention are in direct engagement with the single cam member and are driven radially inwards or outwards, directly by the cam member, respectively. Further, as compared to the 891 patent, the vulcanizing mold of the claimed invention is simple in structure, and is able to achieve a sufficient tightening force with improved durability.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 6 are patentable over the applied references. The dependent claims are likewise patentable over the

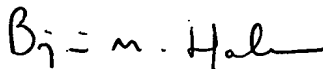
applied references for at least the reasons discussed as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Appendix

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APPENDIX

Changes to Claims:

1. A vulcanizing mold for pneumatic tires, comprising:

upper and lower base plates;

upper and lower sidewall mold members for forming tire sidewall portions, said upper and lower sidewall mold members being attached to said upper and lower base plates, respectively;

upper and lower tread mold members for forming a tire tread portion, said upper and lower tread mold members being attached to said upper and lower base plates, respectively;

said upper and lower tread mold members being constituted of upper segments and lower segments, respectively, said upper and lower segments being displaceable only radially relative to said upper and lower sidewall mold members, respectively; and

a single cam ring ~~which is in direct engagement with the upper and lower tread mold members, the single cam ring being~~ adapted to be displaced independently of approaching displacements of said sidewall mold members toward each other, to thereby simultaneously displace all of said upper and lower segments radially inwards while said upper and lower segments are in abutment with each other.

2. The vulcanizing mold according to claim 1, wherein said upper and lower segments are ~~directly or indirectly~~ engaged with said upper and lower base plates, respectively, such that they are radially displaceable relative to respective one of said sidewall mold members.

5. The vulcanizing mold according to claim 1, further comprising abutment means for defining the upper limit position of the cam ring ~~has~~ relative to the upper base plate.

6. A vulcanizing method for vulcanizing pneumatic tires with a vulcanizing mold which comprises: (i) upper and lower base plates; (ii) upper and lower sidewall mold members attached to said upper and lower base plates, respectively; and (iii) upper and lower tread mold members attached to said upper and lower base plates, respectively, the upper and lower tread mold members being in direct engagement with a cam ring; (iv) said upper and lower tread mold members being constituted of upper segments and lower segments, respectively, which ~~can be~~are radially expanded and contracted relative to the upper and lower sidewall mold members, respectively; said method comprising the steps of:

displacing said upper and lower sidewall mold members toward each other so that said upper and lower segments are brought into abutment with each other; and

operating the cam ring to simultaneously displac~~ing~~^{ing}-displace all of said segments radially inwards and relative to said upper and lower sidewall mold members, with said upper segments in abutment with said lower segments.